

Guidance on Cleaning Up E-mail Files February 2019

All EPA employees are responsible for:

1. Creating and managing the records necessary to document the Agency's official activities and actions, including those records generated by EPA contractors and grantees, in accordance with EPA recordkeeping requirements.
2. Destroying records only in accordance with approved records schedules and never removing records from EPA without authorization.
3. Filing records for safe storage and efficient retrieval and maintaining personal papers and nonrecord materials separately from official EPA records.

For more information about EPA staff obligations in managing their records, see EPA's Interim Records Management Policy:

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-09/documents/interim-records-mgmt-policy-20180822.pdf>

To begin clean-up of your Outlook E-mail boxes you need to identify:

	Definition	Examples	How to manage
Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded information Created or received in the conduct of Agency business Preserved as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or actions of the Agency, or because of the information it contains. <p>All email sent or received by an organization in connection with official business is considered a record. As with other records, the decision process of whether an email is an official record focuses on the information itself, not the media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correspondence relating to a compliance issue or inspection Invitation sent to a meeting where you are the organizer Correspondence to a Project Officer from the Contracting Officer relating to a specific contract 	<p>Email records must be retained and disposed of according to EPA's records schedules. Email records with a retention longer than 10 years must be filed in ECMS using EZ Email Records.</p> <p>Refer to Capstone guidance for more specific information about managing your email records under Capstone.</p>
Transitory records	Messages of short-term interest with no long-term use or value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine requests for information or publications 	Delete as soon as they have been acted on or when no

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replies that require no other action, compilation, research, or policy decision • Notices of holidays, retirements, or charity fund appeals 	longer needed. Under Capstone, they must be deleted within 90 days of receipt, or they will be retained for 10 years for non-Capstone employees, or permanently for Capstone Officials.
Nonrecords	Government-owned materials that do not document an official activity or transaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra copies of minutes and agendas for a committee in which you are not the official record keeper • Listserv messages kept for reference • Messages where you are copied but do not need to take action. (The recipient and senders' copies are records.) 	Read and delete as soon as purpose is served.
Personal emails	Relate to your personal, private life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email from a friend about lunch • Personal invitations to a non-work related event • Solicitations received not related to agency business • Notices of non-work related meetings 	Read and delete as soon as the purpose is served. You should not keep personal files at work, where they may come under scrutiny or become caught up in a FOIA request or litigation.

For more information on how to identify a record, see What is a Record:

<http://intranet.epa.gov/records/whatis/index.html>

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Sort your in-box:

1. **Sort by from** – click on the “From” column in Outlook – this will sort the column alphabetically.

Do a quick review of the sorted material. There will be groupings that can easily be deleted as non-records, such as:

- Email from friends, family
- Mass mailers
- Job alerts
- Listserv emails
- Email from vendors
- Spam notifications

2. **Sort by date** – click on the “Received” column; this will place the oldest or newest email at the top, click on date again to reverse the order:

Sorting by date requires a closer review of the email. You can’t delete it just because its “old”. However, you can get a view of issues/tasks that are completed and can be saved as records. If you are a non-Capstone employee, you can save any emails with retention longer than 10 years in ECMS.

Sort your out-box:

1. **Sort by name** – click on the “To” column in Outlook – this will sort the column alphabetically. The out box is most likely to contain records that you created and contain a record of your work activities. You can save emails that are records with a retention longer than 10 years in ECMS, if you are a non-Capstone employee.
2. Review the email and delete any non-records such as email to friends and family and email that does not contain material created in the course of business, received for action, or needed to document EPA's activities.
3. **Sort by date** – click on the “Sent” column in Outlook. A second review of the out box by date can give you a view of issues/tasks that are completed and can be saved as records. You can save emails that are records with a retention longer than 10 years in ECMS, if you are a non-Capstone employee.
4. **Remember:** your calendar may also be considered a record and can be requested under FOIA and as a response to litigation.